



The President's Daily Brief

17 January 1973



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

A South Vietnamese [] tells us that the Communists have established a special command for Saigon and vicinity in order to cope with post-cease-fire developments. The new command is to direct political as well as military operations. (Page 1)

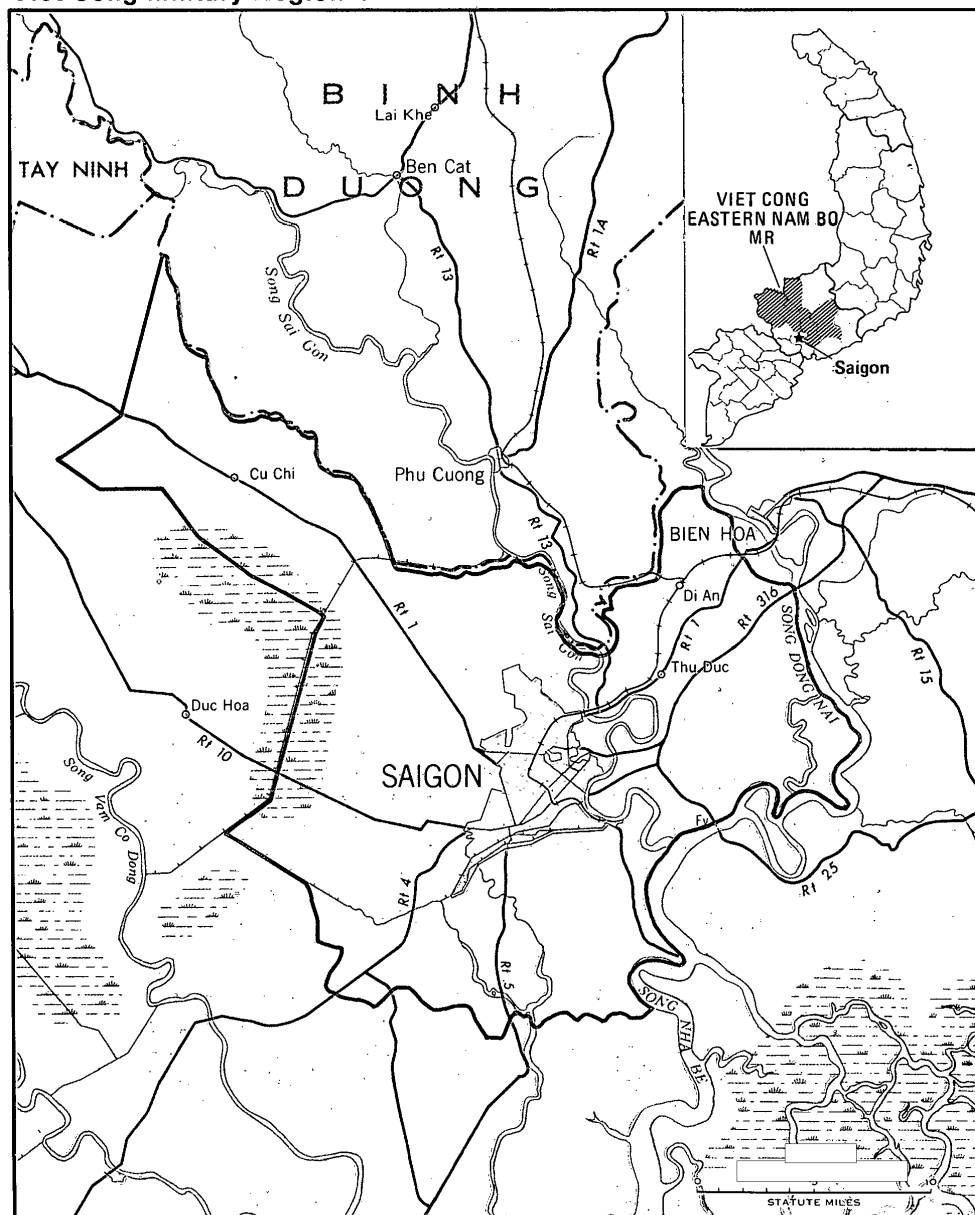
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The North Vietnamese continue to move tanks, artillery, and supplies toward South Vietnam. (Page 2)

President Marcos today completed his moves to legitimize his one-man rule of the Philippines. He signed into law the new constitution but said he would continue to rule by martial law. (Page 3)

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Viet Cong Military Region 4



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SOUTH VIETNAM

The Communists have established a special command for Saigon and its immediately surrounding area in order to cope with post-cease-fire developments, [redacted]

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[redacted] The new command, designated Military Region 4, includes Saigon's 11 precincts and eight adjoining districts. [redacted] the Communists are putting high-level, trusted cadre in the administrative positions.

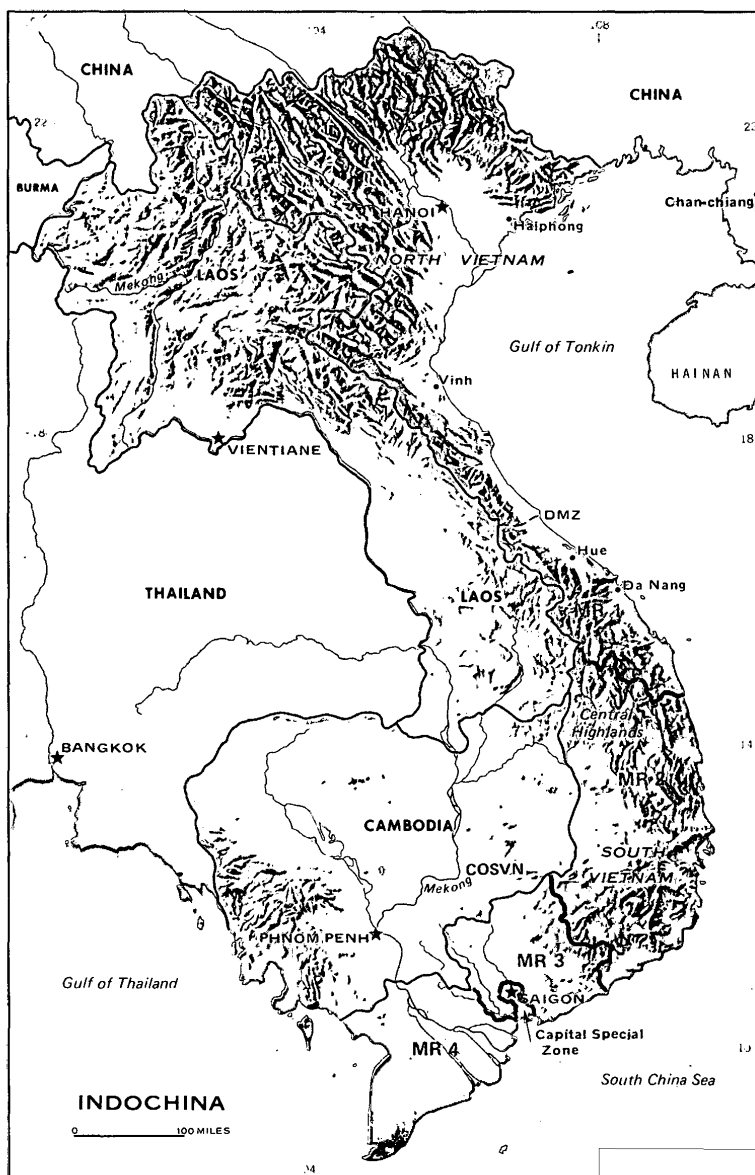
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The new command will direct political as well as military operations. Political agents are to be given either "strategic" or "tactical" assignments in accordance with their capabilities and access. A new military division, probably made up of elements from existing divisions, will be assigned to MR 4. An artillery regiment reportedly will be included, and at least one infantry battalion and a sapper company will be located in each district.

[redacted] the Communists are also setting up another command, which he calls the "Eastern Nam Bo Military Region," in five provinces lying to the north and east of Saigon. This command is to provide support through Cambodia for military operations in the new MR 4.

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NORTH VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese continue to move tanks, artillery, and supplies toward South Vietnam.

Over 200 tanks, the first of which began moving south in October, are now spread from southern North Vietnam to southern Laos. Intercepted messages indicate that they are destined for southern MR 1, the central highlands and coastal provinces of MR 2, and the COSVN area. A small number of tanks had entered Quang Tri Province by last weekend.

Over 20,000 tons of supplies and equipment--about 40 percent of it ordnance--were moving through the North Vietnam panhandle in December and early January, according to intercepted communications. Additional supplies are going through the Laotian panhandle. Antiaircraft battalions in that area have been alerted to protect large numbers of vehicles moving southward.

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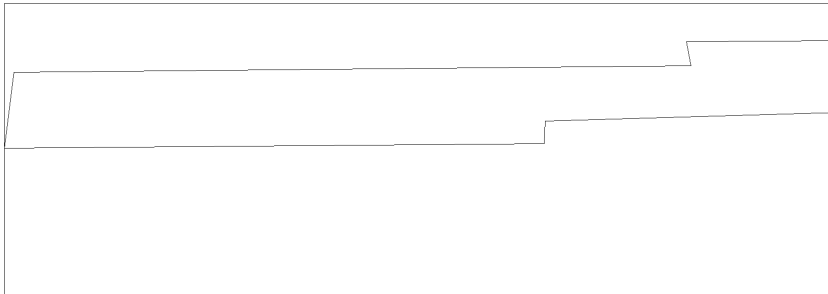
PHILIPPINES

President Marcos today completed his moves to legitimize and extend indefinitely his one-man rule by signing into law the new constitution. He told a "people's congress" of officials and civic leaders that the document had been ratified by the action of local citizens' assemblies which have been in session for the past week. Marcos assumed the offices of president and prime minister, but said he would continue to rule by martial law rather than convene the new national assembly.

Marcos acted at this time in order to head off a brewing Congressional challenge to his authority. Lacking any constitutional forum, the political opposition now has little recourse but to bow to the President's authoritarian course. Most signs point to a rising level of public disenchantment with his proclaimed "New Society," however. If the trend continues, Marcos may find it impossible to avoid further repressive measures that would increase his dependence on the armed forces.

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Chile: A two-day strike at the Chuquicamata copper mine is the most serious of the growing protests over food shortages. The loss of even two days' output at Chuquicamata, which produces 30 percent of Chile's copper, means a loss of substantial foreign exchange earnings needed to buy food for increasingly short-tempered consumers.

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